

SUMMARY OF SOVIET PROTEST
TO U. S. RE OVERFLIGHTS

On 10 July 1956 Soviet Ambassador Georgi N. Zaroubin presented a protest note (No. 23) to Secretary of State Dulles, charging that United States "military aircraft" (identified as a twin-engined bomber) had "grossly violated" Soviet air space on 4, 5, and 9 July by flights as deep as 200 miles inside the Soviet Union. Lincoln White, State Department Press Officer, referred Mr. Zaroubin's note to the Defense Department. The Department of State stated immediately, and the Department of Defense later confirmed, that the United States knew nothing about such flights. "No aircraft assigned to the command in Europe," Headquarters in Wiesbaden, Germany, insisted, "violated Soviet or satellite territory."

On 16 July 1956 Polish Ambassador Ramuald Spasowski delivered an oral protest to Robert Murphy, Deputy Under Secretary of State, stating that "jets flying at high altitudes" (mentioned in the Soviet note) violated Polish air space. The Ambassador also claimed that at 6:00 p.m. on 10 July a plane had violated Polish air space.

On 19 July 1956 the State Department officially answered the Soviet protest note:

"A thorough inquiry has been conducted and it has been determined that no United States military planes based, or flying, in or adjacent to the European area at the time of the alleged overflights could possibly have strayed, as alleged, so far from their known flight plans, which carefully exclude such overflights as the Soviet note alleges. Therefore the statement of the Soviet Union is in error."

The State Department noted that the Soviet protest implied a "plot to hinder the improvement of international relations," and added: "These remarks, which are as obviously out of place as they are unwarranted, indeed of themselves have the effect of hindering the improvement of international relations."

On 21 July 1956 the Czech Foreign Ministry passed a note of protest to the American Embassy in Prague demanding that overflights be stopped.

On 23 July 1956 Marshal S. I. Rudenko, Russian Air Force Chief of Staff, stated that the Air Force has been ordered not to shoot on sight foreign planes intruding into Soviet air space (and that is why the violations mentioned in Note No. 23 were not - shot down). The Marshal also claimed that the violators were flying at "tremendous altitude." "Our planes," he emphasized, "flew alongside and signaled them to land, but the American planes disregarded the signals and continued on their courses." One American reported suggested the planes may have been made in the United States and sold to another country. "That's your responsibility," Rudenko replied.

On 14 July 1956, Drew Pearson in his evening broadcast stated, "Here is the inside story on those mysterious airplanes that have flown deep inside Russia several times in the past two weeks. Though the Russians blame the American Air Force, I can reveal these planes are not American at all; they are privately owned, converted fighter bombers operated by anti-Communist refugee groups from secret air bases in West Germany. The Russians know that they are dropping pamphlets, agents and supplies to anti-Communist forces in Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. That's one reason for the unrest in this area."

27 July 1956